

## CONTEXT

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- Sri Lanka, an island country in the northern Indian Ocean, is susceptible to multiple natural hazards, including coastal erosion, cyclones, drought, floods, landslides, monsoons, and tsunamis. These hazards can result in loss of life, damaged crops and infrastructure, increase the transmission risk of vector-borne diseases, and negatively affect livelihoods of local communities. Climate change has exacerbated hazard-related risks, contributing to the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters in the country.
- Sri Lanka continues to recover from a decades-long civil war, which lasted from 1983 to 2009. The conflict adversely affected the country's economy, displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and generated significant psychosocial needs, among other effects.
- A fire erupted on a cargo ship near Sri Lanka's Port of Colombo in May 2021, causing the ship to discharge plastic debris and possible chemical waste in surrounding waters and western coastal areas of the country. The vessel—which carried fuel; plastic pellets; and chemicals, including nitric acid—subsequently sank between early and mid-June, 2021, further endangering coastal and marine resources and adversely affecting the livelihoods of local communities.



## ASSISTANCE

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- USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) provided more than \$3.6 million in Fiscal Years (FYs) 2020 and 2021 to support early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) initiatives in Sri Lanka to improve the capacity of community organizers, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to prepare for and respond to humanitarian emergencies in the country.
- USAID/BHA is supporting Sarvodaya, a Sri Lankan NGO, with nearly \$1.5 million to work with community leaders, grassroots activists, and other groups to develop localized disaster response and mitigation strategies for 60 vulnerable communities in disaster-prone areas across Sri Lanka. The program works to bolster community resilience and improve disaster response coordination between local organizations and international relief actors, aiming to reach an estimated 250,000 individuals through community-led disaster mitigation activities, disaster management trainings, and public awareness campaigns. Additionally, with nearly \$850,000 in USAID/BHA funding, partner World Vision is working to increase local ownership of ER4 efforts by collaborating with local organizations to conduct key ER4 activities supporting an estimated 3,500 individuals.
- With nearly \$1.2 million in FYs 2020–2021 funding, USAID/BHA supports the UN World Food Program (WFP) to provide technical assistance to the GoSL Ministry of Disaster Management (MoDM) to improve risk management policy and practice. WFP is helping the MoDM develop national-level contingency plans; improve communications,

coordination, and information management among disaster response management entities; lead disaster response simulations; and support the implementation of Sri Lanka’s National Emergency Operations Plan, which outlines roles and responsibilities within the country’s emergency response structure.

- Through USAID/BHA’s regional Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response (PEER) initiative, which organizes professional development trainings for emergency responders across South Asia, USAID/BHA partner the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center trains health care workers in Sri Lanka to respond to mass casualty incidents, thereby strengthening the health system’s capacity to respond to major disasters. Building on the PEER initiative, USAID/BHA has also partnered with Sri Lanka’s National Society for Earthquake Technology to establish a network of search-and-rescue professionals and PEER-trained medical first responders in the country.



USAID partnered with Sarvodaya Disaster Management Unit to preposition plastic sheeting, water containers, and shelter materials in Sri Lanka.

- To further promote resilience and preparedness in Sri Lanka, USAID/BHA is working with a variety of U.S. Government partners, including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Using the Incident Command System (ICS)—a standardized, multi-hazard response management mechanism—USFS is assisting disaster management professionals in Sri Lanka to integrate ICS strategies into their disaster response mechanisms, supporting their ability to respond to sudden-onset emergencies. Meanwhile, with USAID/BHA support, USGS is providing technical assistance to GoSL scientists to establish protocols for future landslide disaster responses, improving operational tools to issue landslide alerts and incorporating landslide metrics and processes into existing hazard maps. Additionally, in partnership with USAID/BHA, NOAA is building the capacity of national meteorological and hydrological services and disaster management agencies, utilizing hydrometeorological information and warnings to improve impact-based forecasting, and better equipping emergency managers, first responders and GoSL officials to make timely and informed decisions that save lives.
- In response to the May 2021 cargo ship fire off the coast of Sri Lanka, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) issued a disaster declaration and provided \$100,000 to WFP to provide a livelihoods assessment and one-off cash assistance to 3,000 families dependent on lagoon-based fishing who were highly impacted by the ship-fire incident.

USAID/BHA Funding in the Sri Lanka <sup>1</sup>			
	Emergency <sup>2</sup>	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2020	–	\$2,898,510	\$2,898,510
FY 2021	\$100,000	\$750,000	\$850,000

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of November, 5, 2021. Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.

<sup>2</sup> Includes funding for programs that integrate ER4 activities with emergency response.